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COLOMBO SUMMIT IN PERSPECTIVE

ANNCR:

THE SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRY OF SRI LANKA, NEXT WEEK, HOSTS THE FIFTH SUMMIT CONFERENCE OF NON-ALIGNED NATIONS. VOA NEWS ANALYST JOSEPH SULLIVAN HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS.

VOICE:

IT'S A DIFFERENT WORLD TODAY FROM THAT OF THREE YEARS AGO WHEN THE LAST NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT WAS HELD IN ALGIERS. THE TRAGIC CONFLICT IN INDOCHINA HAS ENDED, AND THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA ARE ENGAGED IN AN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINED PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE REGION. IN THE MIDDLE EAST, DIPLOMACY HAS REPLACED BLOODY CONFRONTATION IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. SO TOO HAS DIPLOMACY BEEN A TOUCHSTONE IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DISEQUILIBRIUM, FED BY WORLDWIDE INFLATION AND THE FOUR-FOLD JUMP IN OIL PRICES, HAS FOSTERED THE SO-CALLED "NORTH-SOUTH" DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIALIZED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON HOW BEST TO SHARE THE WORLD'S WEALTH.

AS THE WORLD HAS CHANGED SO TOO HAS THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. THE PIOUS POLITICS OF NEUTRALISM THAT DISTINGUISHED THE MOVEMENT IN ITS FORMATIVE YEARS HAS BEEN GRADUALLY REPLACED BY A MOOD OF ECONOMIC MILITANCY. (OPT) ALSO GONE ARE ALL THE LEADERS WHO CREATED THE NON-ALIGNED COALITION, EXCEPT PRESIDENT TITO OF YUGOSLAVIA. AND WITH THE PASSING OF THE OLD LEADERSHIP -- NEHRU OF INDIA, NASSER OF EGYPT, NKRUMA OF GHANA, SUKARNO OF INDONESIA, HAILE SELASSIE OF ETHIOPIA -- NO CHARISMATIC FIGURE HAS EMERGED FROM THE MOVEMENT. (END OPT)

THE CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE NON-ALIGNMENT MOVEMENT HAVE ALSO CHANGED. ORIGINALLY MEMBER COUNTRIES WERE REQUIRED TO HAVE AN INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY BASED ON PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND INDEPENDENCE OF POLITICAL BLOCS. THEY COULD NOT HAVE FOREIGN MILITARY BASES ON THEIR TERRITORY AND COULD NOT BE A PARTY TO A MULTILATERAL MILITARY ALLIANCE OR A MUTUAL DEFENSE PACT. BUT PRESSURES HAVE MOUNTED IN RECENT YEARS TO RELAX SOME OF THE MEMBERSHIP RULES AND SUCH COUNTRIES AS NORTH VIETNAM AND NORTH KOREA PARTICIPATED IN LAST YEAR'S NON-ALIGNED MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE.

IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE THE NON-ALIGNED LEADERS ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE THEIR CUES FROM THE 1975 MINISTERIAL MEETING IN LIHA, WHERE THERE WERE CHARGES OF COLONIALISM AND THE ALLEGED PERPETUATION OF COLONIAL ENCLAVES IN THE PANAMA CANAL AND PUERTO RICO. THE CONFERENCE ALSO ENDORSED THE NORTH KOREAN POSITION ON THE KOREAN QUESTION, WHICH WAS LATER DEBATED IN THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THERE WAS ALSO LANGUAGE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND ON ISRAEL WHICH LED TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON ZIONISM AND RACISM.

BUT POLITICS MIGHT WELL TAKE A SECOND PLACE TO ECONOMICS. FOR, INDEED, A NUMBER OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES WANT A MUCH MORE GENERAL APPROACH TO POLITICAL ISSUES AND A RENEWED EMPHASIS ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THEY ARGUE THAT IT IS ON ECONOMIC ISSUES THAT THE SOLIDARITY OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD AS WELL AS THE SOLIDARITY OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, HAS REAL MEANING AND REAL IMPORTANCE.

THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT THE MORE RECENT NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS HAVE BEEN TO A LARGE DEGREE DOMINATED BY THE MORE RADICAL REPRESENTATIVES. HOWEVER, THERE'S BEEN AN EFFORT --

PARTICULARLY BY THE ASIAN NON-ALIGNED MEMBERS -- TO BRING THE MOVEMENT BACK FROM BEING A REGIMENTED BODY COMMITTED TO POSITIONS WITH WHICH MANY OF ITS MEMBERS FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE TO A MUCH MORE CONSULTATIVE, TRULY CONSENSUS-SEEKING BODY IN THE NON-ALIGNED TRADITION. AND NEXT WEEK'S SUMMIT IN COLOMBO SHOULD INDICATE HOW GREATLY THE FORCES OF MODERATION WILL PREVAIL IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT.

JS/FFG/PY